

Washington, DC - This afternoon the United States House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed H.R. 2095, the Federal Railroad Safety Improvement Act of 2007, a bill that establishes some of the most stringent federally mandated rail safety provisions in recent history. "This legislation was both welcome and necessary in light of the alarming number of rail related accidents and incidents in Bexar County over the past few years. The Federal Safety Improvement Act of 2007 directly addresses a high priority safety issue and its mandates will result in a safer national rail system," said Congressman Charlie Gonzalez (TX-20).

The legislation would directly address the issue of employee fatigue by mandating a 25% increase in the minimum rest period length for operators. It would also nearly double the current level of safety inspectors and requires the implementation of positive train controls, technology that can limit the severity of accidents caused by human factors, by 2014. The legislation authorizes a total of \$1.1 billion over four years for rail safety programs.

"I'm particularly pleased with the comprehensive approach this bill takes when tackling rail safety issues in America. And while the bill is not perfect, it does signal major progress in the area of rail safety with added oversight and necessary funding. I'm hopeful that this bill will serve as a stepping stone as Congress works towards ensuring our nation's rail system is as safe and secure as possible," added Gonzalez.

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